

**FINAL REPORT  
OF THE  
INTERIM STUDY COMMITTEE  
ON  
EDUCATION ISSUES**



**Indiana Legislative Services Agency  
200 W. Washington St., Suite 301  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2789**

**November, 1998**

## **Interim Study Committee on Education Issues**

### **Membership Roster**

#### **Representatives**

Representative Paul Robertson, Chair  
DePauw

Representative Dennis Avery  
Evansville

Representative Cleo Duncan  
Greensburg

Representative Robert Hoffman  
Connersville

Representative Richard McClain  
Logansport

Representative Gregory Porter  
Indianapolis

#### **Senators**

Senator Teresa Lubbers, Vice Chair  
Indianapolis

Senator Robert Meeks  
LaGrange

Senator Gregory Server  
Evansville

Senator Mark Blade  
Terre Haute

Senator Billie Breaux  
Indianapolis

Senator Connie Sipes  
New Albany

### **Legislative Services Agency Staff**

Mark Goodpaster  
David Hoppmann  
Fiscal Analysts for the Committee

Irma Reinumagi  
Jeanette Adams  
Attorneys for the Committee

## **I. LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DIRECTIVE**

Legislative Council Resolution Number 98-2 charged the Interim Study Committee on Education issues with the following:

- Study issues related to kindergarten (birth date for enrollment, compulsory attendance, and funding for full-day kindergarten).
- Study special education and special education administration, performance based accreditation, technology, resources and time allocated to staff development, standardized testing (including ISTEP), student remediation, school-to-work liability, and deregulation issues as they relate to education.

## **II. INTRODUCTION AND REASONS FOR STUDY**

A. The basis for studying kindergarten issues is Senate Resolution 35 authored by Senator Lubbers.

B. The basis for studying special education and other issues is HB 1035 authored by Representative Hoffmann and Senate Resolution 17 which was authored by Senator Server.

## **III. SUMMARY OF WORK PROGRAM**

The Committee met five times and heard from 67 witnesses during the interim.

At the first meeting on June 10, the Committee examined the issue of the kindergarten cutoff date of June 1.

At the second meeting on June 24, the committee examined the issue of full day kindergarten.

At the third meeting on July 8, the committee examined the issue of the Graduation Qualifying Examination's effect on students with learning disabilities.

At the fourth meeting, on August 12, the committee discussed the fiscal issues associated with full day kindergarten and heard from persons who were opposed to full day kindergarten.

At the final meeting, on September 24, the committee examined the draft final report and discussed the fiscal issues associated with full day kindergarten.

## **IV. SUMMARY OF TESTIMONY**

### **A. Full Day Kindergarten:**

Under current law, state support for kindergarten students is one half of the support for all other elementary and high school students whether the kindergarten students attend half day or full day. Advocates for full-day kindergarten cite this lack of state support as a major reason that few children attend full-day kindergarten programs in Indiana's public schools.

Testimony and committee discussion centered on the costs and funding options for full day kindergarten and arguments for and against full day kindergarten.

#### **1. Costs and Funding of Full Day Kindergarten:**

LSA staff estimated that the costs of implementing full day kindergarten could range between \$78 and \$100 million, depending upon class sizes, number of teachers and number of classrooms that would need to be either built or refurbished.

A series of funding options were also presented to the Committee members. These options were either a flat grant amount per student or some variation of the school funding formula.

These costs and financing options were presented in staff reports that were presented at the September 24th committee meeting.

## 2. Arguments Supporting Full Day Kindergarten:

- A full day kindergarten program allows time for teachers to adequately present an academic kindergarten curriculum. This could promote a higher degree of academic success and for the teacher to better know their students.
- A full day kindergarten program allows more time to provide supplemental enrichment activities, which might include art, music, physical movement activities, computer technology and literature
- Children who do not receive parental support at home are more able to obtain academic parity of basic skills with those students who have parental support at home.
- There would be no mandates for the school corporation to offer nor for children to attend full day kindergarten. Decisions would be made by the corporation's school board to implement full day kindergarten in their school corporation.
- Optional full day kindergarten has wide support among school groups. The Indiana State Teachers Association, the Indiana State School Board Association, the Indiana Superintendents Association, parents' groups and the Department of Education all support the idea of full day kindergarten as a good investment for the Indiana's young children.
- Researchers who study early childhood education generally believe that children who attend full day kindergarten will be better prepared when they attend first grade than children who attend a half day kindergarten.
- Parents appear to generally support full day kindergarten. It is a way to keep children in one place during the day when both parents are working or if the child lives in a single working parent household. When children attend kindergarten full day, more parents may choose to be employed outside of the home, increasing family income.
- School corporations in Indiana are currently using either federal, state or local monies to fund full day kindergarten for children who are at risk of being poorly prepared for first grade. Currently 56 school corporations report financing full day kindergarten to target 4,970 at risk children in their school corporations. Expanding the program statewide will allow school corporations to reach more children who appear to be at risk.
- Some children currently do not attend kindergarten because two way transportation is not available. Full day kindergarten would allow for these children to attend kindergarten.

## 3. Arguments against Full Day Kindergarten

- Research indicates that few full day kindergarten programs actually sustain influence on literacy beyond the third grade. Consequently, to make these programs cost effective, the state and school corporations are likely to need additional funding to provide professional development for teachers and to design a proper kindergarten curriculum.

- Full day kindergarten is expensive. More teachers and other school personnel would need to be hired and in many school corporations, classrooms would need to be either built or refurbished. Once the commitment is made for full day kindergarten and implementation begins, the additional costs to the state will be significant and indefinite.

## **B. Changing the Kindergarten Cutoff Date:**

Under current law, children must be five years of age by June 1 to officially enroll in Kindergarten in Indiana's public schools. This cutoff date makes the cohort of children in Indiana the oldest of any state.

Like the issue of full day kindergarten, testimony and committee discussion centered on the arguments supporting and opposing changing the date from the current June 1 to a later date in either the late summer or early autumn and on the costs of changing the date of entry.

Concerning the costs, it was noted that changing the date of admission could result in the need for additional classrooms and expenses in at least some of the school corporations with a growing enrollment. Changing the date would also increase the ADM (Average Daily Membership) and consequently generate additional state expenditures from the State General Fund. LSA staff estimated that if kindergarten enrollment increased by 22% when changing the date to September 1, the additional costs to the state due to changes in the school funding formula would be \$23 million in the first year and \$78 million in the second year.

Witnesses supporting the change in admission date to a later time in either the late summer or early fall noted the following reasons:

- Families moving from other states to Indiana can be affected by the discrepancy in the date change if they then move to other states with a later cutoff date. Consequently, these children are generally one grade behind their peers when they move to another state.
- Some students who quit school prior to receiving a diploma will complete an additional year of school if they enroll in kindergarten at an earlier year.
- Because of the increasing number of dual income earners and the number of single parent households, many more children have had preschool or day care experience than they did a generation ago. Consequently, they are more prepared for a longer school day.
- For many Indiana children, particularly those at-risk, kindergarten is their first opportunity for the kind of essential early educational experiences necessary for cognitive development. The current enrollment cutoff date (June 1) postpones such experiences for children with summer birthdays.
- Only about one-fourth of eligible children are served by Head Start. Additionally, it is typically the case that Head Start programs only serve children through four years of age. The current date of June 1 leaves many five year old children with nowhere to go for quality education experiences.
- Research shows that children benefit academically from early education experiences that are of high quality. The current June 1 entrance date puts Indiana in the position of delaying these vital opportunities for children longer than any other state in the nation. Moving the entrance date to September 1 will provide thousands of children in Indiana quality early education experiences at this critical time of their development.

Concerning the arguments against changing the cut off date, one school principal and one guidance counselor testified against any change in the cut off date. They noted that some children with summer birthdays do not perform as well as children with earlier birthdays. The Chair also noted that he received many letters from kindergarten teachers who wished to retain the current cutoff date.

### **C. Students with Disabilities and the Graduation Qualifying Examination:**

Testimony from witnesses centered on the following concerns: 1) compliance with federal law requiring students with disabilities to be included in statewide accountability systems; 2) efforts by the Department of Education to develop an alternate test to the Graduation Qualifying Examination for certain students with disabilities; and 3) certain students with disabilities who complete high school, not being able to receive a high school diploma due to the requirement of achieving a minimum standard on the Graduation Qualifying Examination.

## **V. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **1. Full Day Kindergarten**

The Committee voted 12 - 0 to recommend to the General Assembly the following drafts:

PD 3502: Optional full day kindergarten.

PD 3425: Professional development for full day kindergarten.

### **2. Date Change For Kindergarten**

The Committee made no recommendations concerning changing the date for kindergarten admission.

### **3. Special Education and the Graduation Qualifying Examination**

The Committee made no recommendations concerning the Graduation Qualifying Examination.

## **WITNESS LIST**

### **First Meeting, June 10, 1998:**

Terry Spradlin, Legislative Liaison, Department of Education.  
Mary Beth Morgan, Primetime Coordinator, Department of Education  
Dick Thompson, North Salem  
Trish Weis, Director of Early Childhood, Anderson Community Schools  
Tom Smith, Principal, North Harrison Elementary School and Lisa Jones, Counselor, North Harrison Elementary School  
Mr. Lynn Black, Director of School Improvement, MSD Pike Township  
Marlane Tisdale, Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children  
Ruth Guthrie; Donna Laut; and Stephanie Adamson, Require Entrance Age Change Today (REACT)  
Robert Kalinsky, Carmel  
Donnette Trader, Gosport

### **Second Meeting, June 24, 1998:**

Kathy Smith, Executive Assistant, Office of the Governor  
Terry Spradlin, Legislative Liaison, Department of Education  
Mark Goodpaster, Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Services Agency  
Mary Beth Morgan, Primetime Coordinator, Department of Education  
Larry Carlson, Superintendent; Alisa Mathas and Donna Gilman, Kindergarten Teachers; South Vermillion Community School Corporation  
Phil Schoffstall, Superintendent; Cathlin Gray, Principal; Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation  
Pat Pritchett, Superintendent; Nancy Beaty, Administrator; Ruby Matthew and Laura Highsmith, Kindergarten Teachers; Indianapolis Public Schools  
Ray Klotz, President, Parent Advisory Committee; Guy Dillard, Shelia Donis, and Marcia Jackson, Principals; Vigo County School Corporation  
Brad Case, Superintendent; Alan Drew, Principal, South Knox School Corporation  
Victor Smith, IUPUI  
Maureen Jayne, Parents for Public Education  
Sally Flood, Indiana State PTA  
James Elicker, Assistant Professor of Child Development and Family Studies, Purdue University  
Sandra Chappel, President, Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children (ISEYC)  
Mary Boggs, Indianapolis  
Frank Bush, Indiana School Boards Association  
Tracy Dust, Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents  
Norma Kacen, Indiana State Teachers Association

Gail Pluta, Indiana Federation of Teachers

### **Third Meeting, July 8, 1998:**

Robert Marra, Director of Division of Special Education, Department of Education  
Kevin McDowell, General Counsel, Department of Education  
Craig Mortell, Carmel, IN  
Howard Litton, Jr., Jasper IN  
Bertha Muenks, Tell City  
Julie Giostad, Retired Teacher  
Connie Craig, New Castle  
Mary Burke, New Castle  
Linda Shore, Learning Disabilities Teacher

Diane Vagely, Richmond, IN  
John Dickerson, ARC of Indiana  
Thomas Doyle, Director of Special Education, MSD Pike Township  
Marilyn Faris, Executive Director, Covered Bridge Special Education District  
Susan Price, Director of Special Services, Clay Community Schools  
Lisa Tanselle, Indiana School Boards Association  
Amy Cook Lervy, Council of Volunteers and Organizations for the Handicapped  
Norma Kacen, Indiana State Teachers Association

**Fourth Meeting, August 12, 1998:**

Ed St. John, Director, Indiana Education Policy Center  
Dr. Ena Shelly, Professor of Education, Butler University  
Kim Vail, Indiana Farm Bureau  
Joan Gubbins, Our Kids Incorporated  
John Baker, Professional Standards Board  
Denna Renbarger, Principal, Centralized Kindergarten, MSD Lawrence Township  
Yvonne Engelbrecht, Require Entrance Age Change Today (REACT)

**Fifth Meeting, September 24, 1998:**

Mark Goodpaster, Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Services Agency